

Adult Learners in Nebraska

An “adult learner” is usually a student age 25 or older. At the undergraduate level, they typically do not follow the more traditional path to college, which is to enroll immediately after high school. Adult learners often go back to school to advance in the workplace or when they’re seeking a career change. They usually attend college on a part-time basis as they juggle family and work responsibilities. In Nebraska, like the rest of the country, educational attainment among adult learners is vital to the state’s economic future.

Degrees and Enrollment by Age Group

Sector/ Age Group	2019-2020 Degrees/Awards Conferred				2019 Fall Enrollment			
	Bachelor's or Below		Graduate Degree		Undergraduate		Graduate	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
University of Nebraska								
24 or Younger	6,506	80.5%	583	15.5%	34,327	89.4%	3,309	25.8%
25-39	1,413	17.5%	2,682	71.2%	3,498	9.1%	7,746	60.5%
40 or Older	161	2.0%	504	13.4%	575	1.5%	1,748	13.7%
Nebraska State College System								
24 or Younger	884	73.7%	29	6.4%	5,943	85.6%	206	14.1%
25-39	238	19.8%	329	72.8%	720	10.4%	898	61.3%
40 or Older	78	6.5%	94	20.8%	277	4.0%	362	24.7%
Community Colleges								
24 or Younger	4,171	56.3%	-	-	28,554	72.4%	-	-
25-39	2,407	32.5%	-	-	7,818	19.8%	-	-
40 or Older	825	11.1%	-	-	3,072	7.8%	-	-
Nonpublic Institutions								
24 or Younger	3,473	57.5%	290	8.0%	17,249	66.6%	2,134	19.2%
25-39	1,897	31.4%	2,384	66.2%	6,343	24.5%	6,407	57.7%
40 or Older	670	11.1%	929	25.8%	2,315	8.9%	2,563	23.1%
Total								
24 or Younger	15,034	66.2%	902	11.5%	86,073	77.8%	5,649	22.3%
25-39	5,955	26.2%	5,395	69.0%	18,379	16.6%	15,051	59.3%
40 or Older	1,734	7.6%	1,527	19.5%	6,239	5.6%	4,673	18.4%

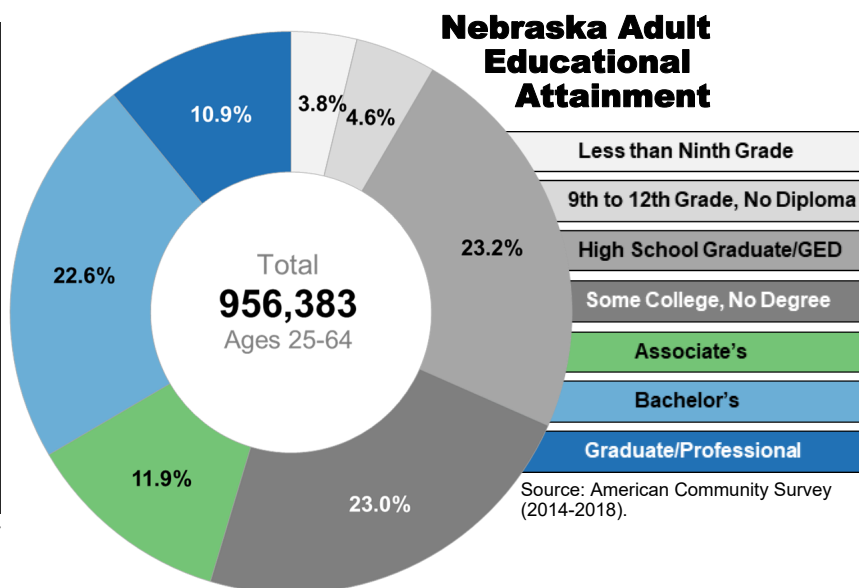
Note. Excludes students of unknown age. Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

5,581 Veteran student enrollment — all Nebraska institutions, undergraduate and graduate (2018-19)

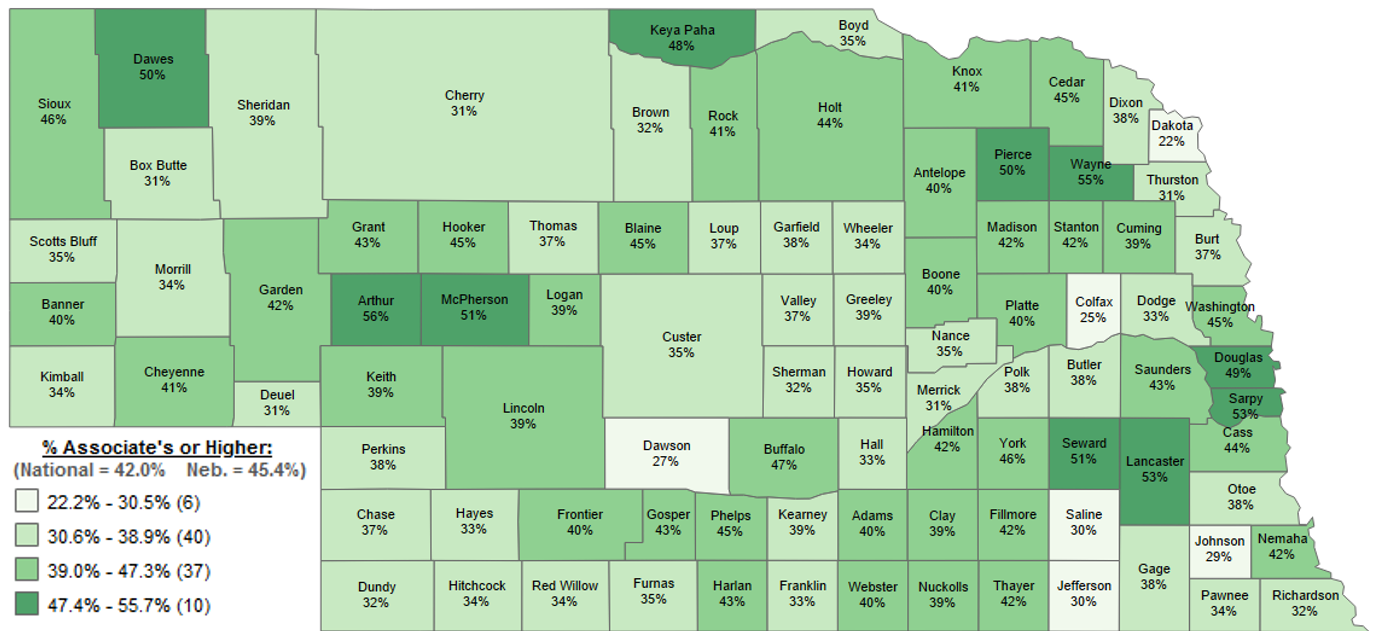
Top 5 institutions: veteran enrollment

Bellevue University — 2,299
University of Nebraska at Omaha — 841
Metropolitan Community College — 768
University of Nebraska-Lincoln — 437
Southeast Community College — 221

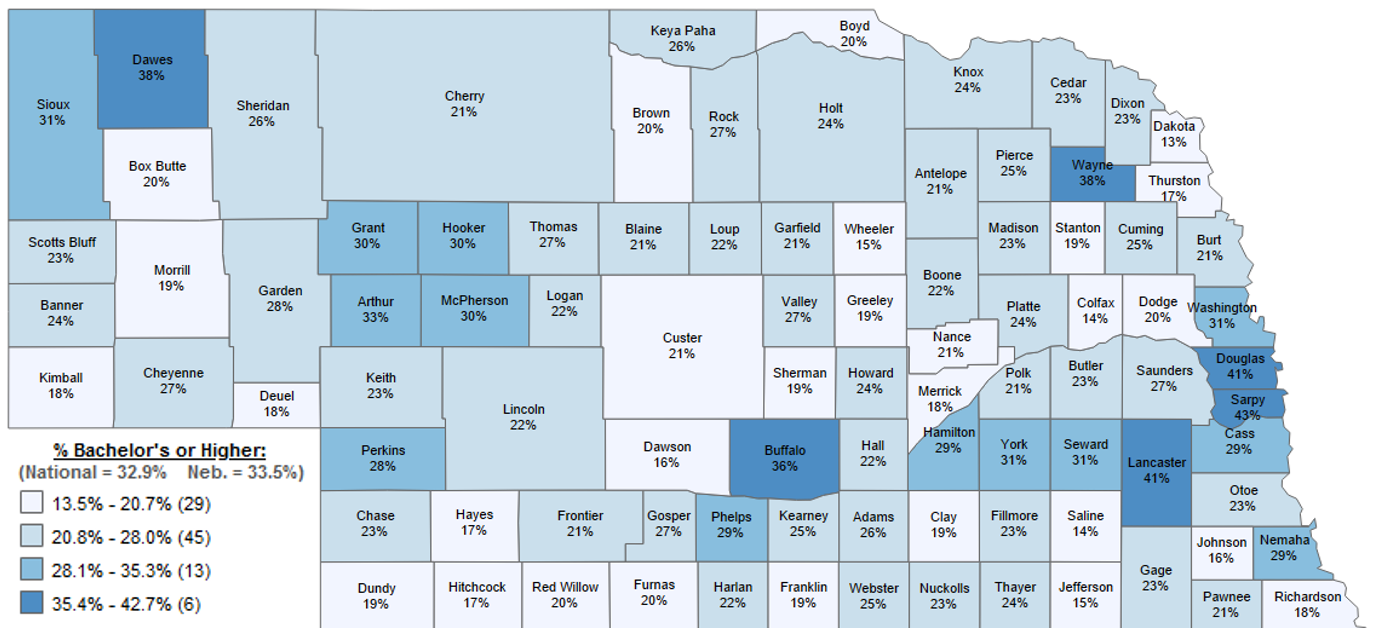
Note. Includes students who received benefits/assistance via the Post-9/11 GI Bill or the Department of Defense Tuition Assistance Program. May include dependents. Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.



Percent of Population Age 25 to 64 with an Associate's Degree or Higher, by County



Percent of Population Age 25 to 64 with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, by County



Source: American Community Survey (2014-2018).

Strategies: What states are doing to enroll, retain, and graduate adult learners

Nebraska – Gap Assistance – Pays tuition and related course and certification fees for low-income community college students taking non-credit courses and short-term for-credit courses that lead to certifications and jobs in high-need fields.

Indiana – The Adult Student Grant – offers a renewable \$2,000 grant to assist returning adult students with financial need in starting or completing an associate's degree, bachelor's degree, or certificate. The **Workforce Ready Grant** pays tuition and fees for qualifying high-value certificates in high-demand fields at Ivy Tech Community College or Vincennes University.

Iowa – Future Ready Iowa Last-Dollar Scholarship – Covers tuition and fees not paid by other sources for students in programs of study up to two-year degrees that lead to high-demand

jobs in Iowa. The **Future Ready Iowa Grant** program provides a minimum of \$1,000 for tuition support to Iowans who left college after earning at least half the credits toward a four-year degree in a high-demand field and who return to complete a degree.

Tennessee – Reconnect – A "last-dollar" scholarship for adults to attend community college tuition-free. Among the requirements of students: must not already have an associate or bachelor degree and must participate in a partnering advising program.

Missouri – Fast Track – Covers tuition and fees not paid by other sources for adults pursuing a certificate, bachelor's degree, or an industry-recognized credential in a high-demand field. Recipients must work in Missouri for three calendar years or the grant converts to an interest-bearing loan.